

Expectations After Surgery

Weight loss

- Most patients lose 20-30 lbs in the first 2 months after surgery
 - 10 lbs each month after is normal/average (for ~6 months)
- You won't lose every day (or even every week) – weight loss isn't always consistent. Getting comfortable with not relying ONLY on the scale for your success is helpful (consider taking measurements instead).
- Constipation, inflammation, fluid retention and healing can all make the scale lower slower, but this is to be expected

The “honeymoon phase”

- Lasts for about 6-12 months after surgery
- Weight loss is consistent and faster during these months, and then it will slow down as the body adapts/adjusts to surgery
- You can still lose weight after the honeymoon phase but the rate will be slower
- Reaching your protein goals and limiting starches during this time will help you get the most weight loss out of the honeymoon phase

Slider foods

- High carb foods like chips, cookies, crackers, cake, candy, ice cream
- These foods are VERY easy to digest AFTER the honeymoon phase
- If you're not eating your protein slowly and first, slider foods may feel like they digest “easier and better” – they may sit lighter on your stomach. Don't let this cause you to displace your protein with these foods.
- Most patients may believe that they've “stretched the pouch” if they can eat plenty of slider foods, but it's because they digest so easily. If you eat protein first, slowly, and completely, then you'll feel restriction for life.

Behavioral Habits for success

Avoid food “getting stuck” or feeling sick often by doing the following:

- Take dime or bean-sized bites
- 30/30 Rule: chew 30 times and swallow – wait 30 seconds to take your next bite
- Put fork/knife/food down between bites (hands-free chewing)
- No more than 30 minutes per meal (more than this leads to grazing or “munching” throughout the day)

Mindful eating: getting in touch with your hunger/fullness signals and relearning them/listening to them

- This is a learned skill and takes practice
- Try to remove distractions when eating and focus on your meal
- This will help you truly enjoy your food and be able to listen to internal cues of fullness
- It’s easy to eat past fullness after surgery so savor each bite and follow the 30/30 rule

Listen to internal cues for when you are full AND measure food

- Do not let the visual of your portion drive your eating, but rather, your feeling of fullness (meaning stop when you are satisfied)
- Use smaller plates, forks, spoons
- Measuring your food can be a good tool
 - Use ¼ cup, ½ cup and 1 cup measuring cups – after 1 year your meals should be no more than 1.5 cups of food
 - Use a kitchen scale – after 1 year your meals should be no more than 8.5 oz of food at a sitting (proteins and veggies will weigh more – this is what you want to fill your plate with)
 - Protein should be 3-5 oz per meal

Drinking while eating:

- **Do not** drink during or a ½ hour after meals
 - You may drink right up to your meal
 - Drinking and eating at the same time may wash food through your stomach faster and not keep you full as long after your meal
- **Do** drink 64 oz fluid over the course of the day and increase fluids in between your meals (water, sugar free drinks count towards fluid goal)

Issues you may experience

Nausea/Vomiting: Common Causes

- Dehydration: must drink 64 oz water or sugar-free fluid daily
- Taking multivitamin on an empty stomach
- Eating too quickly
- Not chewing food well
- Bite sizes are too big
- Eating too much
- Waiting too long in between meals to eat (drop in blood sugar)
- Lying down after eating
- Drinking too quickly
- Drinking with meals
- Please inform the office ASAP if you are vomiting intermittently for 24 hours or more

Constipation:

- Add fiber supplement to diet
- Drink 64 oz fluid/day or more
- Increase exercise
- Take Miralax - 2 doses in 24hr period maximum
- If no relief, please follow office protocol/call office

Common Pitfalls

“All-or-nothing” mentality

- All or nothing never worked long term, so why would it work now?
 - Remember, “slip, don’t slide”
 - 80/20 rule – give yourself flexibility 20% of the time so you don’t feel too restricted
- You are not a failure if you have slip ups – you’re human! It’s when you let slip ups dictate whether or not you get back on track that can cause you to digress and regain weight
- Your weight is a reflection of what you do MOST of the time – so if you slip up, get right back on track at the next meal
- Make realistic goals – if you can’t meet the goal, the problem is with the goal and not you
- Integrate your new way of eating with your lifestyle and seek support from friends and family
- You need to find a balance for yourself, but also give yourself structure and set yourself up for success (setting up a schedule for meals, keeping high protein foods in the house, not keeping slider foods in the house)

Old habits that sneak in slowly over time

- Food journaling can help to identify these behavior changes – send your food journal to your dietitian!
- Disruptions in your routine from stress, changes in lifestyle, new job, etc. can push you off track
- Don’t keep “trigger” foods or tempting foods in the house
- Make sure you have enough food/protein in the house to sustain you – you don’t want to be scrambling at every meal
- Have protein shakes/bars on hand so if you forget to prep or accidentally skip a meal, you can use a supplement

Weighing yourself

- Weighing or taking measurements once per week can give you objective data to stay on track. If you get obsessive, stay away from the scale and take measurements or note how your clothing fits over time.
- Remember that many things can influence your weight – fluid retention, menstrual cycle/hormones, eating too much sodium, bowel movements, exercise
 - Sometimes the scale is not the only measurement you should look at for success
 - Also look at your non-scale victories like fitting into clothes, feeling better overall, less pain, etc.

Emotional Eating or mindless eating

- If you are hungry, eat – true hunger will provide signals like growling, being moody, light headedness – these signals will not go away unless you eat
- If you are eating out of anything other than hunger (boredom, anger, stress, reward, excitement), name the feeling and deal with that feeling
 - “If you can name it, you can tame it”
- Find other outlets/distractions – brush your teeth, chew sugar free gum, walk outside to take a deep breath of air, go on a walk, call a friend, drink a glass of water (unless you are truly, physically hungry)

GRAZING! **Grazing can slow weight loss and lead to weight gain**

- Grazing is “nibbling” throughout the day and not having structured meals
- Grazing is a common reason for weight regain as meals are not balanced and may even include slider foods
- Leave 2-4 hours between snacks and meals

Example of daily schedule (to avoid grazing)

Wake up at 6:30am

8am: Breakfast (take calcium citrate w/ vitamin D)

12pm: Lunch (take calcium citrate w/ vitamin D)

3pm: Snack (take calcium citrate w/ vitamin D)

6:30pm: Dinner (take multivitamin)

Fluid: 40 oz water, 1 sugar free popsicle, 8 oz unsweetened tea, 16 oz Pure Crystal Light w/ Ice - increase between meals

Exercise: 20 minute brisk walk, 20 sit ups

Notes: eat up to 2 hours after waking for your "day", each meal/snack should be 2-4 hours apart, limit eating to 2-3 hours before bedtime (laying down)

When to reach out for support

- Weight loss is slower than expected (we tend to see 20-30 lbs lost in the first 2 months after surgery)
- Weight regains
- You are not sure what you should be doing/eating
- You have other factors that are impacting your success
 - Stressors, temptations at home, family not supportive, injury: seek appropriate referral
- ***Research shows that regular follow ups with your surgical team promote longer-term weight loss success!***

Key Points to Remember

- **Eat when hungry, but don't wait too long until you're "hangry"**
- **Stop when full/satisfied**
 - Use the internal sense of fullness to tell you when to stop and trust your body
- **Start with protein first at each meal**
 - Obtain 70-100 grams of protein per day
- **Pay attention to which foods are more filling for you than others**
 - Solids are typically more filling than liquids (solid protein vs. liquid protein shake)
 - If you are hungry all the time, make sure you are eating mostly solid foods (ex: switch your protein shake to a protein bar to see if it fills you up longer) and pick filling foods (such as high protein and high fiber foods, veggies and fruits) more frequently in your diet so you feel a sense of satiety

Weight regains CAN happen but many of these factors are in your control. If you need help, reach out to the COMP team!